



# CPEC

## Update on Program Review Activities

California Postsecondary Education Commission  
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Review of new degree and certificate programs proposed by the public higher education systems is a major CPEC activity. The Legislature, Administration, and the Legislative Analyst's Office consider program review to be one of CPEC's most important responsibilities. In the past six months, staff have reviewed proposals for two new programs at community colleges, seven at California State University, two at the University of California, and two joint UC–CSU programs. This is fewer than in previous years, but the state budget crisis has meant that campuses and system offices have taken a more conservative approach to developing new programs. Most programs reviewed recently have been interdisciplinary and low- to no-cost. A few programs that were forwarded to CPEC for review were later retracted by a system office and put on hold for a later date.

### Programs Approved since January

#### *American River College — Healthcare Interpreter*

Recent legislation, SB 853, requires HMOs to provide healthcare interpreters to patients who need foreign language translation or additional English interpretation of their diagnosis and treatment needs. Other factors leading to increased demand for interpreters are a growing non-English speaking population, a growing elderly population, and overall growth of the healthcare industry. This program is low-cost, requiring only a small amount of funding for new library acquisitions.

#### *Pasadena College — Anesthesia Technician*

This is the first program of its kind in the western United States. Existing programs are geared toward general healthcare technicians, but with more hospitals requiring that anesthesiology technicians be certified by the American Society of Anesthesia Technologists and Technicians, a more specific program is needed. A survey of Los Angeles and Orange County hospitals revealed 41 available positions for anesthesiology technicians.

#### *Cal Poly Pomona — MS in Geology*

California has many opportunities for geology students to pursue careers in fields such as seismology, hydrology, environmental science, structural engineering, and geothermal science. There is 25% to 30% projected job growth in the next six years and a master's degree is necessary for many careers as project leaders. No additional funding is needed to support this program.

#### *Cal Poly San Luis Obispo — MS in Agricultural Education*

This program is intended to prepare agricultural science teachers. There is high demand for this program by students in Cal Poly's agricultural programs. Very little hard data is available on workforce needs in agricultural education — where geographically, how many positions, what level of education needs instructors. Nevertheless, staff supported moving forward with this program due to Cal Poly's longstanding expertise in agriculture and agricultural education, and the cost-effective means for establishing the program.

## Issues in Program Review

The state budget crisis has made the need to set priorities for higher education increasingly important. The higher education system still needs to grow despite limited funds. Workforce and degree priorities should be part of the state's goals for the development of higher education. Other issues raised by the program review process include:

### *Measuring costs and benefits of new programs*

The challenge in reviewing program costs is that there is no formula that allows CPEC to weigh the cost of the program with the projected benefit. When each program is submitted, it is often hard to gauge on a case-by-case basis, particularly in times of state budget crisis, what is an appropriate dollar amount. This also ties to the need to refer to state priorities when weighing the relative benefit of proposed programs.

### *Reviewing the need for existing programs*

CPEC is statutorily directed to participate in the review of existing programs. This is an important activity in ensuring sound expenditure of state resources, but CPEC's small program review staff have very limited ability to work with the systems in reviewing existing programs while continuing to review new proposals.

### *Increase in certification requirements*

Some professions have increased education requirements for certification by professional associations. This issue requires ongoing dialog between private industry, the education community, and state policymakers to address implications of certification growth and ensure the integrity of the degree-growth process.

## Proposals currently under review

### *UC Davis*

MS, PhD, Energy  
MA/PhD, Religion

### *UCLA*

MA/PhD, Chicano Studies  
MURP, Urban and Regional Planning

### *UC Merced*

PhD, Cognitive & Information Science  
MS/PhD, Quantitative & Systems Biology

### *UC San Diego*

PhD, Applied Social Sciences Emphasis in Substance Abuse  
MAS, Architecture-Based Enterprise Systems Engineering  
Joint PhD, Biomedical Informatics

### *UC San Francisco*

PhD, Epidemiology and Translational Science  
MS, Dental Hygiene

### *UC Santa Cruz*

PhD, Biomolecular Engineering & Bioinformatics

### *CSU Monterey Bay*

MS, Management Information Technology

## New CPEC web pages on program and facilities review

Staff are adding a section to the website on Program and Facilities Review. The pages will describe CPEC's role in the process and requirements and submission guidelines for new proposals.

The section will offer information to proposal authors at the campus and departmental levels regarding the material that is required or recommended for review. Staff hope that posting the guidelines will result in a more seamless review process.

## CPEC's Annual Program Review Report

In December 2009, the Commission adopted the report *Program Planning and Review to Promote Responsiveness to Public Needs*. The report contains a summary of CPEC's program review activities and includes the systems' five-year program plans. It also discusses CPEC's work with its program review advisory committee to streamline the process. The advisory committee will meet later this year to discuss refining program review criteria and establishing a collaborative statewide plan of program priorities.

The report is available at [www.cpec.ca.gov/completereports/2009reports/09-31.pdf](http://www.cpec.ca.gov/completereports/2009reports/09-31.pdf)